

**Town of Brentwood**  
**Budget Committee Meeting at Brentwood Town Office**  
Meeting Minutes of December 19, 2022

*Present:* Jack Mitchell, Michelle Siudut, Lois DeYoung, Letty Bedard (Swasey rep), Russ Kelly (selectboard rep), Anthony Phillips, Alina Arida (by phone for part of the meeting)  
*Guests:* Swasey School principal Ron Kew, SAU staff Chris Andrewski, SAU staff Mollie O’Keefe, Liz Faria, Jon Morgan

Jack called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. The pledge of allegiance was recited.  
Motion by Lois, seconded by Letty to allow Alina to attend remotely; Letty- aye, Russ- aye, Lois- aye, Michelle- aye, Jack- aye; approved 5-0-0.

Motion by Lois, seconded by Letty to approve the minutes of December 12, 2022 as amended; Letty- aye, Russ- abstain, Lois- aye, Michelle- aye, Alina- aye, Jack- aye; approved 5-0-1.

**BOS Report** - No report

**Budgets**

Swasey School Budget. Motion by Letty, seconded by Lois to discuss; Letty- aye, Russ- aye, Lois- aye, Michelle- aye, Alina- aye, Jack- aye; approved 6-0-0.

Letty distributed a data sheet showing student population and class size since 2007 sourced from NH DOE website. In general the number of school-aged students in the state has decreased. In 2013-2014 there were a total of 203,414 students in both public and private schools; in 2022-2023 that number was 183,480. This shows about a 10% drop statewide. Swasey numbers for 2013-2014 were 338, for 2022 it was 278.

Regular Education: Teacher salary increases (3%) are contractual; they have hired a full-time reading specialist; and moved a special ed aide to regular instruction aide. Books/printed media line increase is for workbooks for math and new social/emotional curriculum. Some of these were previously covered by grants, due to a change in the way IDEA is calculated there is less money available.

Special Education: Salary increases (3%) are contractual. SpecEd BCBA (behaviorist) under contracted services line is 1.4 position currently and had previously been covered by a grant, now 1.5 position (adding another half day) and no longer covered by grant; there was also an increase in students who need this service. Ron Kew stated currently 20% of Swasey enrollment is in special education (state average is 15%).

Psychological Services: This person is full-time; increase is for a step change; this is the max amount for this position.

Speech Services: New hire for half-day position.

Instruction & Curriculum: The curriculum coordinator position is being rolled into the assistant principal position.

Media Services: Media aides salaries position was incorrect in previous budget, therefore appears as a large increase this year. This is 4 hours per day.

Legal Services: Increase due to contract negotiations for para-professionals. Previous year 2021-2022 was exponentially larger than budgeted due to teacher contract negotiations and two cases, now resolved, involving students.

School Board Expenses: Membership fee increase

Office of the Superintendent: Swasey's portion of the SAU Admin budget. It was noted this budget went up 15% but they are using monies from previous year so overall increase/impact is 5.19%.

Office of the Principal: New position of Assistant Principal, who will be curriculum coordinator, and will also deal with SpecEd, present at LEA (Local Education Authority) meetings (previously, Principal Kew did the LEA meetings).

Operation of Plant: Electricity and LP Gas are locked in at current rate with other schools. Project line is down as the budgeted amount included the parking lot paving, which was done a year in advance due to reduced expenditures in the FY22 budget; 2 AC unit replacements are planned for this year, and the School Board has made a plan for the next few years to keep this line level funded.

Care of Grounds: Grounds maintenance now goes through SAU. Increase is for fuel, maintenance of center courtyard (previously done by volunteers) and playground repair.

Transportation: Contractual increase of 2.9%

Support Services: Health insurance increases based on GMR of 15.6%. Retirement non-certified (not teachers)/certified (teachers).

Food Services: This budget line cannot go negative; it can be positive and brought forward to next year. There is a "spare" line under Food Service Management so if Food Services goes negative, there are funds to cover. Families were not being charged for food during COVID as the government was paying but that stopped for 2022-2023. The COVID money went towards food director's salary. Very positive comments about the foods being served.

Jack asked if the money for last year's warrant articles was incorporated in this budget. It was explained the 3 warrant articles for trust funds (safety, maintenance, special education) are usually funded by unreserved funds, so not part of the budget. Letty said the Board has not yet discussed those warrant articles.

Anthony asked if this is the same budget presented to the Board. Letty said there were 2 changes: removed RTI (response to intervention) which one of the paras received previously but is not needed now that they have the reading specialist; added .5% increase to hourly employees which put them at 3.5% over last year.

Anthony asked about any discretionary amounts in the budget; Letty felt there were none.

Jack asked Ron why student population is decreasing: Ron feels kids do not leave before they graduate, unless families move. Jack asked what % of Swasey graduates graduate from EHS, Ron did not know but he said the majority of students who leave Swasey go to CMS.

Motion by Letty, seconded by Alina to approve \$6,460,079.53 (a \$383,965.67 or 6.32% increase); approved 5-2-0. Letty said the tax impact will be \$.52/\$1000 valuation which is \$210.14 for \$400K home or \$262.74 on \$500K home.

The School Board has negotiated a contract with the para-professionals; the increases over the next 4 years will be 3.5% - 5% - 3% - 3%; they will now be offered health insurance with the district paying 80% for single, and that same amount for a couple or family. Question if the insurance rates are the same as teachers; Letty said the rates for teachers vary from 72% to 94%. The cost for the contract in year one is \$181,602.07; year two is \$52,768.80; year three is \$38,122; year four is \$37,970. The tax impact in the first year will be \$.25/\$1000 valuation which is \$99.41 for \$400K home or \$124.27 on a \$500K home.

Jack inquired about adequacy funds; Letty said the adequacy funds we receive from the state represent about 12% of the total raised.

Government Buildings. Motion by Lois, seconded by Anthony to discuss; approved unanimously.

Discussion on electric line, Jon Morgan said a lot of the electric costs are in other budgets; the electric line in this budget is only for town office/police. Motion by Russ, seconded by Anthony to approve \$84,860, which is a \$1,075 and 1.28% increase; approved unanimously.

Mosquito Control. Motion by Lois, seconded by Alina to discuss; approved unanimously.  
Motion by Letty, seconded by Lois to approve \$30,200; approved unanimously.

### **Old Business**

General Government. Motion by Michelle, seconded by Lois to reopen the general government budget; approved 4-3-0. Michelle stated that since the BOS voted not to fund the Brentwood Newsletter, and there being no plan for another newsletter, the budget should be reduced by \$17,575. Discussion about the desire for a newsletter, who would produce it, how it would be funded. Motion by Michelle, seconded by Lois to amend the budget to \$39,977; motion failed 3-4-0. Motion by Letty, seconded by Lois to amend the budget to \$39,978 to leave \$1 in that line; motion passed 4-3-0.

### **Visitor Comments**

Liz Faria questioned if this Committee has amended any budgets prior to tonight; the answer was No.

Liz Faria asked about Police and Fire metrics, wondered how some budgets could go up so much, why is there no standardization? She stated people are not leaving because of money, it is for other reasons.

Liz Faria asked several questions of Letty regarding Swasey school.

Motion by Lois to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

### **Future Meetings/Dates of Importance**

*(Schedule of budgets to discuss is tentative and subject to change)*

January 5 at 6 pm - re-open Library budget

January 10 - SAU Cooperative budget public hearing

January 30 at 6 pm - Warrant Articles

(February 7 - petition warrant article submissions due by 4 pm)

February 9 or 13 (snow) at 6 pm - Public Hearing at Rec center

March 10 - School District (Swasey) meeting

March 14 - Town Elections

March 18 - Town Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Siudut